

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHP JOINS NATIONAL EFFORTS IN RECOGNIZING CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY
AWARENESS WEEK**

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the entire nation will be focusing on Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week, February 9 -15, 1997 in an effort to ensure all children are properly buckled up and those under the age of four and weighing less than 40 pounds are properly secured in a child safety seat.

During 1995 there were a total of 59 children under four years of age killed in traffic collisions. In 31 of those deaths, no safety seat was used. Another 14 were improperly secured and still another four were fastened in adult safety belts. "This is staggering," said CHP Commissioner D. O. Helmick. "Especially when you consider that in the opinion of the CHP collision investigating officers, 43 of the 51 children were either not restrained or improperly restrained could be alive today had they only been properly secured in a child safety seat."

California law requires that all children under four years of age regardless of their weight and who weigh less than 40 pounds regardless of their age, must be properly restrained in a federally approved child safety seat *every* time they ride in a motor vehicle. Additionally, the back seat is the safest place for children of any age to ride and *never* put an infant (less than one year old) in the front seat of a car with a passenger-side air bag.

"Please take a moment to ensure that every child you transport in a motor vehicle is properly secured in a child safety seat. If you're not sure, check the car owner's manual and the installation instructions that came with the child safety seat or call your local health department. If these few simple steps can help save the life of just one child, isn't that worth it?" Helmick concluded.

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